



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012205

Address: 2034 NW 56th St

Applicant: Ginger Garff of Johnston Architects for Greenfire Group LLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 11, 2011

Board Members Present: Jean Morgan (Chair)
Mike DeLilla
Ted Panton

Board Members Absent: Jerry Coburn
David Neiman

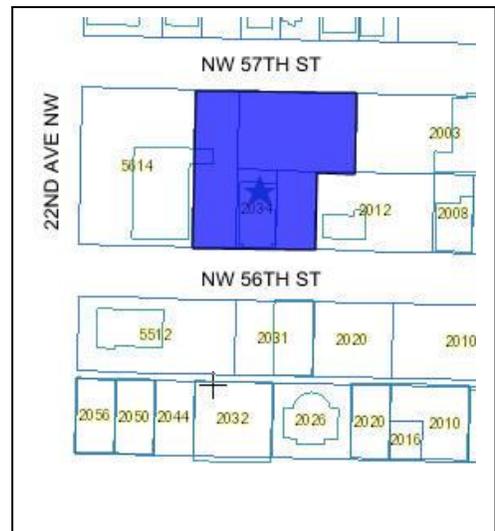
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) Midrise Residential Commercial (MR-RC) across NW 57th St
(South) NC3-65
(East) NC3-65
(West) NC3-65

Lot Area: 36,475 square feet



Current Development: The existing site includes a surface pay parking lot with a one-story 4,686 square foot building constructed in 1960. The site has two street frontages; one on NW 56th St and one on NW 57th St.

Access: Existing access to the site is from two street frontages (NW 56th St and NW 57th St, via three curb cuts. There is a pedestrian access stair from NW 56th St into the site on the west side of the existing building.

Surrounding Development: Surrounding development includes a wide variety of uses. Ballard Library was recently relocated and constructed on the site adjacent to the west. A funeral home is located adjacent to the east, with a bank drive-through located to the southeast. Commercial and office development is located on NW 56th St, with several multi-family structures along NW 56th and NW 57th St.

ECAs: The site does not include any Environmentally Critical Areas.

The site is located in the center of recent Ballard civic redevelopment, in the Ballard Hub Urban Village. The Ballard Library is located adjacent to the west, with Ballard Commons park to the northwest across 22nd Ave NW.

Neighborhood Character: The area includes sidewalks with curb and gutter, and some planter strips. There are no alleys in the immediate vicinity so vehicular access is via curb cuts. Many off-street parking spaces are located in surface lots.

The area includes a high amount of pedestrian and bike activity, with frequent transit service. NW 56th and NW 57th Street have less vehicular activity than nearby NW Market St and the north-south corridors of 20th Ave NW and 22nd Ave NW.

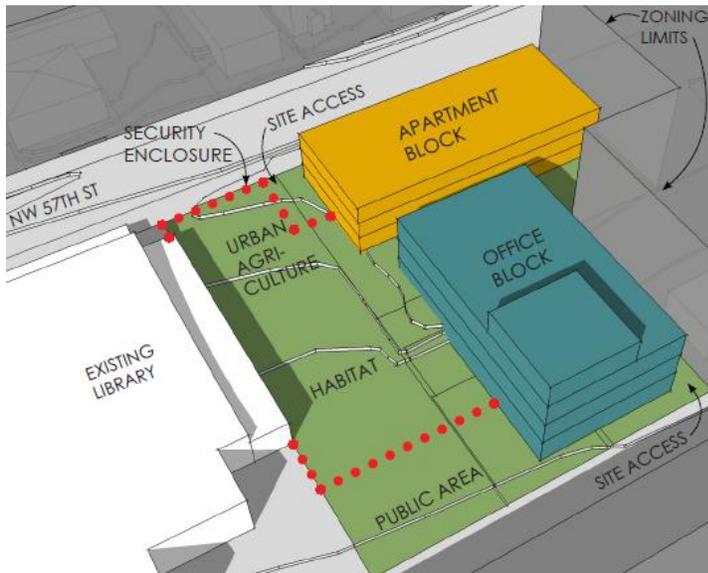
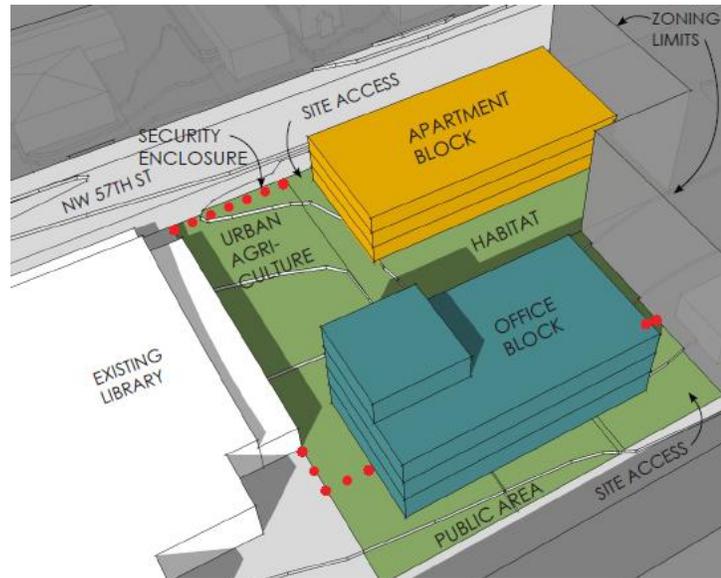
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development includes demolition of the existing structure and parking, and construction of two buildings with a curb cut on each street frontage. The proposed building at NW 56th St is a 3-4 story office and restaurant building. The proposed building at NW 57th St is a 5-6 story residential building. All parking is proposed below grade, accessed from a curb cut on NW 56th St and a second curb cut on NW 57th St. The total development would include 20-25 residential units, 21,000 square feet of office space, a possible small retail/restaurant space (size undefined at this time), and 42 parking stalls. The applicant noted that the broader goal of the development is to create a sustainable development but not necessarily apply for sustainability ratings such as LEED. Strategies include landscaping for urban agriculture and habitat, green roofs, stormwater collection and reuse, passive solar design, and photovoltaic panels.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Four alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include a design that is below the maximum height for this zone. The options also all include two buildings with residential uses at NW 57th St and commercial uses at NW 56th St, two curb cuts, and landscaped open space between the buildings.

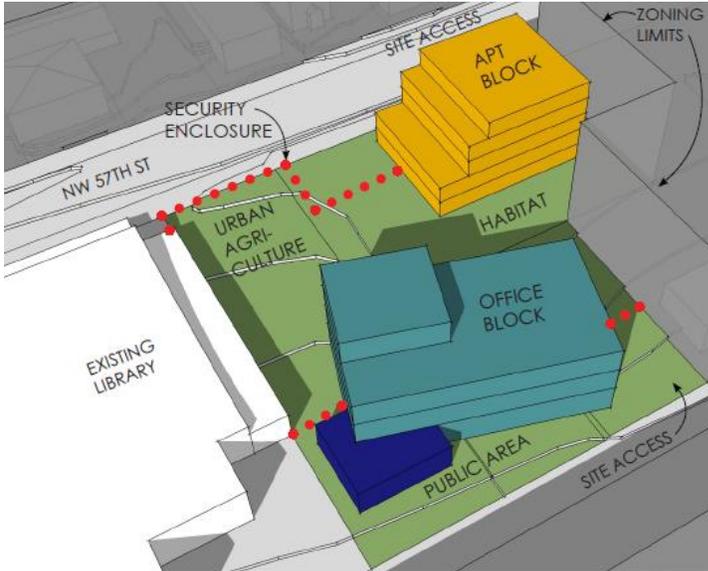
The first scheme (Alternative A) showed a three story apartment building located at the northeast corner of the site with a curb cut located in the middle of the NW 57th St frontage, an office building occupying most of the southern half of the lot with a curb cut at the southeast corner, an urban agriculture area at the northwest corner, and a landscaped habitat area between the two buildings. This option included 21-32 residential units, 20,160 square feet of office space, and 46 parking stalls. Pros include a simple site plan and large amounts of southern exposure for both buildings. Cons included a less inviting street wall and a large and inefficient residential building footprint.



The second scheme (Alternative B) showed the same size and placement of residential building and curb cuts as Alternative A, with the office building located at the southeast corner of the site. The urban agriculture area was shown in the same location as Alternative A, with a natural habitat area at the center of the site and a public open space area at the southwest corner of the site. This option included 21-32 residential units, 21,120 square feet of office space, and 46 parking stalls. Pros include a simple site plan

and a contiguous landscape area for habitat. Cons included a less inviting street wall, a large and inefficient residential building footprint, less sun exposure for both buildings, and shadows on the apartment building from the office building.

The third scheme (Alternative C) showed a stepped five story apartment building located at the northeast corner of the site with a curb cut located at the northeast corner, and an office building similar to the first option but canted to create more open space at the southwest corner. The office curb cut was shown at the southeast corner, and a small one story retail/restaurant space was shown extending from the southwest corner of the office building. This option included 20-25 residential units, 21,000 square feet of office space, and 42 parking stalls. Pros include a simple site plan, moderately inviting streetscape,

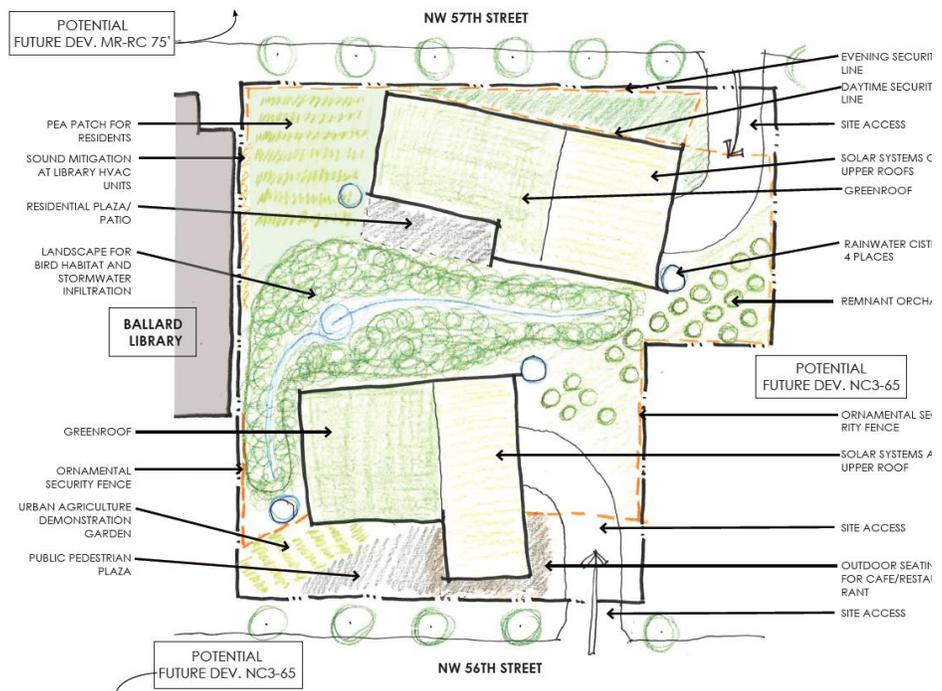


more efficient apartment building, and a large contiguous habitat area. Cons included a less solar exposure for urban agriculture and less building frontage at the sidewalk.

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The fourth scheme (Alternative D, the preferred alternative) was added by the applicant at the EDG meeting and was a further development of the ideas in

Alternative C. This alternative showed an L-shaped residential building located near the center of the north parcel, with a mass that stepped up to the east. The curb cut was shown at the northeast corner, with a p-patch for residents to the west of the building and a residential patio at the southwest corner of the building. The



office building was shown in an L-shape near the center of the south parcel, with the curb cut at the southeast corner and a café/restaurant use at the south edge of the building. Both the residential and office buildings were canted from the property lines, providing more solar access for both buildings and allowing a larger habitat open space between the two buildings and a “remnant orchard” near the east property line. The applicant explained that the remnant orchard would be a landscape design referencing historic orchard uses in the area. Both buildings included green roofs on the western portion of the building and solar systems on the upper eastern portions of the roof. An urban agriculture area was shown near the south property line with a public pedestrian plaza at the southwest corner and south property line.

This scheme also included a north setback for the residential building at NW 57th St, with the intent that some of the ground floor units could function as live-work spaces. The setback could work as a plaza area for these spaces, and the setback would be secured in the evening.

The focus of the development is landscaping, with urban agriculture areas at the edges of the site (edible berry shrubs, etc.), p-patches for the future residents on site, habitat areas for bird habitat, and installing landscaping as a form of security to prevent access between the two sites. The design concept also includes a green roof with topography that would be visible from the street and nearby development. The landscape concept plan includes reference to historic uses in the Ballard area, such as orchards. The applicant and property owner feel that providing landscaped open space visible from the street will create an interesting break in the urban street wall and complement the Library next door.

The applicant also noted that the owner will likely do a Lot Boundary Adjustment to make it possible to sell the residential building separate from the office building. This affects the design of parking and makes a curb cut from each street frontage necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately three members of the public signed the Sign-In sheet at this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Would the p-patches be open to the public, or only residents? The p-patches should be available to nearby residents.
 - The intent is to have the p-patches for the residents, and the urban agriculture areas as publicly accessible edges of the site.
- Would the open space areas be open all the time, or closed off at night?
 - Closed off at night
- The live-work units at the north property line should be located closer to the north property line to make deliveries easier for those business owners, and make the live-work units more like the commercial context of nearby streets.
- The canted building orientation in Alternative 4 is good for reducing glare, but could result in less light for the large number of north-facing units in the residential building. The east-facing office spaces will receive morning glare.
- What are the anticipated shadow impacts to the properties to the north?

- The applicant responded that the proposed development is built below zoning maximum and the properties are across the street from this site, so shadows should be much less than anticipated under the development previously approved for this site.
- Appreciation for the green space and the urban agriculture areas
- Appreciation for building below the maximum zoning height and building footprint

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

A. Site Planning

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Development Surrounding the Park

- **West, North and East sides of the park:** Townhouse style design is appropriate at street level adjacent to the park. Residential developments that provide units that directly access the public right-of-way are preferred since they help enliven the street environment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe and welcoming.
- **South side of the park:** If mixed use development occurs around the park, it is desirable to provide active storefronts along the entire south edge of NW 57th Street, west of 22nd Avenue NW, and a consistent street wall with a two-story minimum height.
- **Mixed Use and Residential on East-West Streets:** Buildings should maintain a consistent street wall up to a minimum of two story development and provide a setback(s), particularly on the south side of the street, beyond three stories to enhance solar access to the street and avoid a ‘canyon’. Deviations from the consistent street wall should be allowed for public usable open spaces. Where appropriate, mid-block pedestrian connections are strongly encouraged. The Design Review Board may consider a departure to reduce open space requirements in exchange for a mid-block pedestrian connection. Such spaces shall be sited and designed in a manner that are clearly public in nature and engaging to pedestrians.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the proposed Alternative 4 massing will present a street frontage that doesn’t respond to nearby streetscape development at the property line, but this could be an interesting break in the fabric.

The applicant should provide more information at the Recommendation stage of review indicating how the proposed streetscape design would create positive spatial characteristics and relate to the nearby streetscape.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Development Surrounding the Park

- **West side: Access to the front doors of townhouse residences should be provided via a paved and well lit pedestrian connection. The non-residential development west of the park should provide at least two separate retail entrances on 24th Avenue NW. Residential access (both vehicular and pedestrian) is most appropriate on NW 58th Street.**
- **Streets: The mid block pedestrian connection should foster social contact in a safe environment. New development is highly encouraged to front retail and/or townhouse style units on the mid block connection at street level. To further promote vitality and safety in the pedestrian experience, entries to retail and townhouse units should be placed in an identifiable and engaging manner.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board reiterated guidance from A-2, and specified that more information is needed about the building entries' relationships to the street at NW 56th St and NW 57th St. The live-work units, the residential entry, the office entry, and the restaurant/café entry require different design treatments. The applicant should identify how the entries respond to this guideline.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Development Surrounding the Park

- **South side: Setbacks from the property line should be allowed up to ten feet consistent with pedestrian zoning requirements for outdoor activity.**
- **Mixed Use Development on Avenues: Commercial uses are encouraged to setback in order to provide opportunities for pedestrian activities where appropriate.**

Comments reflect those in response to Guidelines A-2 and A-3, with additional information needed about how the design of the north and south edges of the site will encourage human activity on each street frontage.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

- **West side of the park:** For residential units with direct access to the street, a ten foot landscaped setback or pedestrian walkway immediately adjacent to the park property edge is recommended with a low landscaped fence or low hedge to help define the relationship between the property and the park edge.
- **North and East sides:** New development should provide a landscaped fence or low, dense hedge to help define the street edge. No more than a ten foot setback to provide an effective transition between townhouse units and the public realm is desirable. In general, the landscaped setback from the park to the building edge should be integrated as an extension of the mid-block pedestrian connection system.
- **Single Use residential:** Townhouse or other residential developments that have direct unit entrances on the sidewalk are encouraged. New development should mark the property line with a landscaped fence or low hedge planting to enhance the continuity of the street.

Comments reflect those in response to Guideline A-3.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

In Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zones, vehicular entrances are discouraged on the avenues. When absolutely necessary, they should be limited to right turn ingress and egress only. Vehicular access to sites is most appropriate along NW 56th, 57th, and 58th Streets. Commercial vehicular access is most appropriate on NW 56th and/or NW 57th Streets. New at-grade parking areas should minimize exposure to the street edge. At-grade parking areas and driveways are discouraged directly adjacent to the park. Where curbcuts are provided, the number and width should be minimized.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of designing the parking access points to enhance the street frontages. The curb cuts are proposed at the east edges of the site and the driveways curve around to the garage entries, which will have a visual effect on the streetscape and on adjacent properties. The applicant should carefully design these areas with a “woonerf” style approach to improve appearance and pedestrian safety, using techniques such as special paving, landscaping, decorative light fixtures, traffic calming, etc.

- A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts. Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.**

Comments reflect those in response to Guideline A-8.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to develop the design with consideration to the important context of the Library next door. The southeast corner of the Library is not the strongest corner of that design. However, it is adjacent to this site, and the applicant should reference other areas of the Library site in this design.

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Institutional Development: The design of institutional buildings should be distinguished from commercial and residential buildings by location on the site, materials and massing. A building with public uses should exhibit a civic presence through careful attention to its relationship with the public realm. A primary entrance, building form, and architectural elements should be designed and scaled to reflect the public activities contained within.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board expressed appreciation for the unusual development goal below the maximum zoning, the stepped building heights, and the interesting design concept. The Board looks forward to seeing more information about the architectural concept at the Recommendation stage of review.

- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.**

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

New development should exhibit craftsmanship through the use of durable, attractive materials. Building materials and interesting details found on older buildings on Market Street and the Ballard Avenue Landmark District should be recalled.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about this item at the Recommendation meeting.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

Comments reflect those in response to Guideline A-8.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Guidelines:** New development is encouraged to contribute to a mid-block, north-south connection system for pedestrians. Active, pedestrian-oriented commercial design and/or ground related town house units are encouraged to extend from the street facing facade and front the pedestrian connection path, thereby contributing visual interest and more opportunity for social contact.
- **Mixed Use Development:** Continuous overhead weather protecting canopies are encouraged on buildings adjacent to the sidewalk. Transparent or translucent canopies along the length of the street provide welcome weather protection, define the pedestrian realm, and reduce the scale of taller buildings.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to define what parts of the site are secured from the public, the design of those security measures, and how the daytime/nighttime programming of areas works with these security efforts. The southwest corner of the site will be especially important, since it's adjacent to an existing parking lot that doesn't include much existing passive surveillance.

A shadow study at the Recommendation stage of review will be helpful in demonstrating which areas of the site will be naturally well-lit and which areas require additional lighting and/or surveillance.

- D-2 Blank Walls. Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.**

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Active, open, interesting building facades are strongly encouraged, particularly on sites adjacent to the park.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about this item at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about this item at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Service areas, loading docks and refuse should be internal to the development or carefully screened, especially on sites directly adjacent to the park.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about this item at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

Comments reflect those in response to Guidelines A-8 and D-1.

- D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information with a conceptual signage plan at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about this item at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about this item at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

Comments reflect those in response to Guideline A-3 and D-1.

E. Landscaping

- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to continue development of the landscape plan, including hardscape strategies at the driveways and plaza areas. The applicant should demonstrate how the different areas function and how the design relates to the overall design concept for the development at the Recommendation stage of review (urban agriculture demonstration garden, remnant orchard, habitat, p-patch, etc.).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

No departures were identified or proposed at the Early Design Guidance meeting.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.